

Foxborough Middle School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 124855 |
| Local Authority | Suffolk |
| Inspection number | 328234 |
| Inspection dates | 7-8 October 2008 |
| Reporting inspector | Anthony Knight HMI |

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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| Type of school | Middle deemed secondary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 9-13 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School (total) | 432 |
| Appropriate authority | The local authority |
| Headteacher | Mr David Boatman |
| Date of previous school inspection | 20 October 2005 |
| School address | Foxborough Road Lowestoft Suffolk NR32 4SN |
| Telephone number | 01502580777 |
| Fax number | 01502517153 |

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Foxborough Middle School is of average size. The social and economic background of the school is very mixed and includes areas of significant rural and urban disadvantage. The proportion of pupils eligible for free meals is slightly above the national average. There are more pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities than the national average and more pupils with a statement of special educational need. Most of the pupils are White British, although a few pupils are from minority ethnic groups. Very few pupils do not have English as their first language. Pupils' attainment on entry is below the level expected for their age. The school has Sportsmark, and it has also achieved Healthy School status and received Bronze and Silver Eco-schools awards.

Key for inspection grades

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|---------|--------------|
| Grade 1 | Outstanding |
| Grade 2 | Good |
| Grade 3 | Satisfactory |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate |

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Pupils and parents are right in saying this is a good school. The overwhelming response of parents through the questionnaire was of praise for the leadership of the headteacher and dedication of staff. Excellent care, guidance and support help pupils achieve outstanding personal development. Pupils are given the self-esteem and self-confidence to be able to freely admit when they do not understand. As a result, teachers are quickly able to provide extra help when this is needed. Relationships are excellent and all have worked together to create a vibrant school community.

Good leadership and management have enabled considerable improvement since the last inspection. Teaching is now good overall and the increased use of accurate tracking of pupils' progress and increasing clarity of lesson planning has led to pupils making good progress during their time in the school. Pupils who find learning more difficult make particularly good progress. Standards overall are below the national average, mainly because fewer pupils achieve the higher levels. The school is aware of the need to build on its success in increasing progress across the school by giving renewed attention to ensuring all pupils, including the most able, always know what they could do to produce an even better piece of work.

The school is over-modest about its achievements, partly because information is not always shared systematically. Consequently, the extent of improvement is not always clear and opportunities are missed to involve pupils and staff in ongoing evaluation.

The good curriculum contributes significantly to the pupils' enjoyment of school and prepares them well for life beyond. Pupils feel very safe, and make healthy living choices. They thoroughly enjoy learning and make a significant contribution to the school community.

Financial management is secure and the school offers good value for money. The school has demonstrated good capacity for improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve attainment, particularly at the higher levels, by ensuring pupils always know what they need to do to improve their work further.
- Involve pupils and staff more systematically in whole school evaluation.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress during their time in the school given their attainment on entry which overall is below that expected. Pupils who find learning more difficult make particularly good progress. While standards are below the national average, mainly at the higher levels in Key Stage 2, results have improved consistently since the last inspection and pupils are on track to meet, and exceed, the challenging targets for 2009. The school recognises the need to build on these improved results by increasing success also at the higher levels, particularly in Key Stage 2. The improved achievement and standards were confirmed in the lessons observed where pupils often made rapid progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. They are polite and welcoming to visitors, and proud of their school. They are completely clear about the school rules they themselves help to set, and about the consequences of poor behaviour. As a result, there has been a dramatic improvement in behaviour across the school and it is now always at least good. Relationships and attitudes are excellent and pupils provide impressive support for each other. Pupils have a very positive outlook and are happy in school. Their enjoyment in most lessons and activities is very evident. These qualities are reflected in their attendance which is good; their promptness at arriving at school and lessons on time; and by the reduction in exclusions.

Pupils take full advantage of the extensive physical and sporting activities to keep fit. They are keen to learn about, and to practise, healthy eating. They feel very safe and know they can turn to the pupil support worker or to other staff for help if they have any worries or concerns. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They contribute much to the school community through taking responsibility to help other, for example in their excellent involvement in the Play Activities Leaders (PALS) and pupil 'Buddies' schemes. Their understanding of the adult world is also enhanced through a variety of enterprise schemes. Pupils have good opportunities to express their views through the school council and in the staff surveys on pupils' perceptions. The school council is right in wanting to extend these opportunities further through the development of their own questionnaire.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good, with some outstanding practice. The most successful lessons challenge and inspire pupils. They have clear learning objectives, are well paced, and have varied and interesting activities to which pupils respond with enthusiasm. Pupils' work is marked regularly and constructively and targets set, encouraging learners to understand how to improve. The whole school awareness of what makes a good lesson has been enhanced by the collaborative development of a clear planning format. Resources are matched well to different learning needs, and supported by good use of interactive whiteboards. Teachers at all levels are increasingly making effective use of assessment data to ensure the level of challenge is appropriate to pupils' abilities. Teachers are sharing good practice more effectively and there is a strong sense of teamwork. This embraces support staff, who make very effective contributions to pupils' learning. The school is aware of the need to ensure pupils are challenged at all times, especially the most able, by making sure pupils know how they could produce an even better response.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good curriculum provides a balanced range of experiences and learning opportunities. Good improvements have been made since the last inspection, such as the development of a broader primary curriculum in Years 5 and 6. This has had a positive impact on the quality of provision and response of the learners. The introduction of a common lesson-planning framework is also helping to increase consistency across subjects.

Account is being taken of the revised Key Stage 3 curriculum and appropriate thought given to developing the curriculum to meet the needs of the pupils. For example, a new Food Technology course has been introduced and awareness of keeping safe is highlighted well in assemblies and Personal Social and Health Education (PSHE) lessons. The curriculum developed for PSHE and for religious education (RE) is particularly strong. Physical education (PE) and sport also make significant contributions to the health and well-being of the learners. There is an extensive range of extra-curricular opportunities including an excellent range of sporting, social and cultural activities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The care, support and guidance of pupils are outstanding. All staff provide excellent pastoral support and are very committed to promoting all aspects of pupils' well-being. Excellent emphasis is placed on providing positive rewards for good behaviour and good work.

Systems for the safeguarding of pupils are robust. Effective procedures to promote good attendance and behaviour have been developed and consistently applied so that they have secured a more positive learning atmosphere for pupils across the school. Detailed data is analysed to identify and measure pupil progress, attendance, behaviour, and specific learning needs. This information is being used increasingly effectively to provide appropriate additional support. Pupils who have additional learning needs are given excellent help through focused individual education plans and careful interventions. Those with exceptional talents have some successful interventions, and the school is correctly seeking to extend these still further.

Good working relationships have been established with a range of other schools, professionals and services. The pupil support worker, in particular, has made an excellent contribution to pupils' pastoral welfare and behaviour.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Good progress has been made since the last inspection because of effective leadership at all levels. There has been a constant drive on improvement and many aspects of provision have benefited from well-judged actions. For example, teaching has improved through sensible attention to planning and ensuring pupils are clear about the focus of the lesson. The tracking of pupils' progress has been transformed through the effective use of optional tests and improving subject assessment.

The school knows itself well, although judgements are over-cautious. Whole school evaluation draws on clear information from subject leaders. However, the sharing of this information with staff and pupils, as a focus for ongoing debate about school improvement, is less well-developed.

The school has developed good links with other schools and others in the community. The school provides good opportunities for parents and others in the community to share experiences together such as the food clubs and school productions. Appropriate attention is being given to further extending its effective contribution to community cohesion.

The governing body provides good support to the school. Increasing involvement of staff in meetings through regular presentations enables governors to learn more about the work of

the school and check the progress being made. Good thought has been given to finding ways to ensure pupils continue to enjoy the quality of provision they receive now.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate | School Overall |
|---|----------------|

Overall effectiveness

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|---|-----|
| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 2 |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection | Yes |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being? | 2 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 2 |

Achievement and standards

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|--|---|
| How well do learners achieve? | 2 |
| The standards ¹ reached by learners | 3 |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 2 |
| How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress | 2 |

¹Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Personal development and well-being**Annex A**

| | |
|---|---|
| How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners? | 1 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 2 |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles | 1 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 1 |
| The extent to which learners enjoy their education | 1 |
| The attendance of learners | 2 |
| The behaviour of learners | 2 |
| The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community | 1 |
| How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 2 |

The quality of provision

| | |
|--|---|
| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs? | 2 |
| How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners? | 2 |
| How well are learners cared for, guided and supported? | 1 |

Leadership and management

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| How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners? | 2 |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 2 |
| How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 2 |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated | 1 |
| How well does the school contribute to community cohesion? | 2 |
| How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money | 2 |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities | 2 |
| Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements? | Yes |
| Does this school require special measures? | No |
| Does this school require a notice to improve? | No |

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

9 October 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Foxborough Middle School, Lowestoft, NR32 4SN

We enjoyed visiting your school and we would like to thank you for welcoming us and talking to us so openly. You and your parents are right that Foxborough is a good school.

What struck us most was how much the school helps you develop your self-confidence so that you can tell teachers when you do not completely understand what is being taught. You have discovered that not knowing something is an opportunity to learn more. Teaching is good because teachers help you and strive to make learning interesting. We have just asked your teachers to make sure you always know what you need to do to provide an even better response or piece of work.

Foxborough is a very happy school and you have helped achieve this through the way you look after each other. The work of the PALs and the Buddies is particularly impressive. It was good to see that you have opportunities to offer your ideas about how the school could be better. We have asked your headteacher to find ways to involve you even more. Your good school council has some excellent ideas about how this could be done and is keen to hear more from you all.

It is clear that your school has your best interests at heart and knows what you need.

I wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Anthony Knight

Her Majesty's Inspector